
FIRE FACT NO. 012 CHECKLIST(s) : 06 & 06E
TITLE : EXITS – MOST IMPORTANT LIFE SAFETY ISSUE
CHECKLIST ITEM(s) : 06-03, 04, 38, 64 & 06E-14, 06E-15
REFERENCE(s) : 91-101/31-1.1, 31-1.8, 5-1.33, K.S.A. 31-133,
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Kansas Statute Annotated 31-133 gives the Kansas State Fire Marshal responsibility for promulgating regulations to govern the maintenance and construction of exits in all buildings in Kansas other than one and two family dwellings. Historically, the most significant loss of life in buildings from fire is when exits are locked, blocked and/or obstructed. Fire prevention inspections have documented a disturbing number of exit obstructions in schools, colleges, health care, and assembly areas in the state of Kansas.

The Kansas Fire Prevention Code provides guidance for the construction and maintenance of exit systems in buildings. **The ability to escape a building in an emergency is the most important life safety issue.** This code ranks exits by level of importance to the occupant's safety. The highest priority is given to exits serving the largest number of occupants and the lowest priority to those exits which serve the least numbers of the total building capacity. In a 10-story building, a minimum of two stairs serving 270 occupants from all floors is expected to have a two-hour fire rating in addition to being resistant to the entry of smoke. An upper floor corridor in the same building would have a lesser fire resistance. The walls would have only a one-hour fire resistive rating and 20-minute smoke and draft door assemblies separating rooms from the exit corridor. The Kansas State Fire Marshal's ranking of exit features in order of priority is below:

- 1) Building exiting at ground level serving all occupants
- 2) Stair enclosures serving occupants above and below ground level
- 3) Protected stairs serving occupants from 3 floors
- 4) Unprotected stairs serving occupants above floor level
- 5) Exit corridors serving a single floor
- 6) Exits from assembly rooms, hazardous areas, and rooms

Each of these exits above carry specific requirements to protect the building occupants based on the priority ranking of the exit feature and the type of hazard which is most likely to occur at or near these exits. **It is the duty of owners and operators to inspect all facility exits daily to make sure all exit doors and other exit devices are in proper working condition and are available for immediate use in an emergency.** Strict attention shall be given to keeping all exit doors unlocked and unobstructed. All required or marked exits must be maintained and accessible at all times. An exit shall extend from the area inside the exit door to an area outside leading to a public way or street. The exit discharge to a public way should include a hard surface from the exit to the public way or street that can be cleared of snow, ice, and other impediments.



Kansas State Fire Marshal Prevention Division

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Accumulations of snow, ice, or material of any kind including construction materials outside exit doors that may prevent the opening of the door or which would interfere with the rapid evacuation of the building are prohibited.

The greatest number of accidents in all buildings has been on stairs. **Storage of anything in or on stairs and stair landings, which may contribute to a fall of a building occupant, is prohibited.** Exit stair enclosures serving 3 stories or more have strict requirements; vending machines, displays of plants, furniture, smoking rooms, lounges, access doors to unoccupied rooms, and any other use unrelated to exiting is prohibited.

Corridors can be viewed as conduits to an exit stair or direct to the outside. Movable items including furniture, plants, TV/VCR carts, vending machines, recycling containers, trash cans, or clothing, in or adjacent to an exit path may obstruct the exit during a building evacuation or panic exit. In a panic exiting situation, people easily become confused and disoriented.

Movable items which may become trip hazards or reduce the minimum corridor width in colleges to less than 44 inches and in K-12 schools to less than 6 feet are prohibited. In K-12 schools, clothing in corridors is permitted in metal lockers or when previously approved and documented by the Kansas State Fire Marshal Office.

Movable items within 10 feet of an exit door are prohibited.

